

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MADRID 00664 301723Z

61

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 SAM-01 L-02 /056 W

----- 097419

R 301606Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 941

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

US MISSION USEC BRUSSELS 996

US MISSION GENEVA 627

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 664

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJ: SPANISH LABOR SCENE

REF: MADRID 429

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING PAST 10 DAYS STRIKE WAVE APPEARSS
TO HAVE CONTINUED TO DIMINISH IN EXTENT AND INTENSITY,
ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT PROVE ONLY TEMPORARY. FUNDAMENTAL
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS BEHIND STRIKES REMAIN,
AND A NUMBERR OF IMPORTANT LABOR DISPUTES STILL UNRESOLVED.
HOWEVER, TENDENCY INITIATED TWO WEEKS AGO BY GOVT TO CRACK
DOWN ON STRIKES AND LABOR AGITATION HAS UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYED
INHIBITING ROLE. GOVT MEANWHILE, HAS UNVEILED LONG-PROMISED
LABOR LAW WHICH, HOWEVER, FAILS TO DEAL WITH SEVERAL KEY
ISSUES, INCLUDING QUESTION OF RIGHT TO STRIKE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN PAMPLONA AREA, TENSE LABOR SITUATION WAS
CONSIDERABLE ALLEVIATED WHEN 45 MINERS WHO HAD CONDUCTED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 00664 301723Z

SIT-IN STRIKE FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS IN BOTTOM OF 1,500

FOOT DEEP POTASSIUM MINE (REFTEL) ENDED THEIR MIN SIT-IN ON JAN 21. WITH END OF THIS DRAMATIC MINE SIT-IN STRIKE, OTHER SOLIDARITY ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF MINERS, SUCH AS HUNGER STRIKE BY 20 YOUNG PRIESTS IN PAMPLONA EPISCOPAL PALACE, ALSO ENDED AND PAMPLONA LABOR AGITATION AND WORK STOPPAGES SUBSIDED CONSIDERABLY.

2. IN BARCELONA, STRIKE ACTIVITY ALSO HAS GREATLY SUBSIDED AND PRESS REPORTED ON JAN 29 THAT ONLY ONE SMALL BARCELONA FACTORY WAS STILL ON STRIKE. AT 20,000 WORKER SEAT FACTORY, WORKERS HAVE BEEN WORKING RELATIVELY NORMALLY FOR PAST TWO WEEKS ALTHOUGH BASIC ISSUES, SUCH AS THAT OF 400 SEAT WORKERS FIRED DURING RECENT STRIKE AND OF WORKER REPRESENTATIVITY, REMAIN UNRESOLVED. ON JAN 28, CONSULATE BARCELONA WAS APID UNANNOUNCED VISIT TWO SEAT WORKERS WHO WERE REPORTEDLY SEEKING INFORM ALL WESTERN CONSULATES IN BARCELONA ON SEAT SITUATION AND WERE HOPEFUL OF ELICITING PRESSURES FROM WESTERN GOVTS IN SUPPORT OF SEAT WORKERS' DEMANDS. (WORKERS ONLY TALKED TO CONSULATE RECEPTIONIST AND LEFT PRINTED STATEMENT RE THEIR GRIEVANCES.) COMPLICATING SEAT SITUATION, A FOREMAN AT FACTORY AND TWO WORKERS WHO WERE GETTING INTO THEIR CAR IN SEAT PARKING LOT JAN 24 WERE REPORTEDLY INJURED (FOREMAN HAD TO HAVE SOME FINGERS AMPUTATED) WHEN THEY TRIED REMOVE A PAPER BAG THEY FOUND ON HOOD OF CAR, WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE A BOMB THAT EXPLODED IN THEIR HANDS. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS AS TO WHO PLACED BOMB, AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO LARGE MANIFESTATIONS OR STRIKES BY SEAT WORKERS (WHO ARE PERHAPS SOMEWHAT INTIMIDATED) IN WAKE OF BOMB INCIDENT (INCIDENT COULD HAVE BEEN ATTEMPT BY EXTREMIST AGITATORS TO REKINDLE SEAT STRIKE).

3. ONE OF MOST RECENT STRIKE ATTEMPTS IN BARCELONA WAS ON JAN 25, WHEN 27 WORKERS IN A POTASSIUM MINE IN NEARBY MANRESA, TRYING TO IMITATE POTASSIUM MINERS IN PAMPLONA, DESCENDED TO BOTTOM OF THEIR OWN MINE SHAFT AND COMMENCED AN INDEFINITE SIT-IN STRIKE TO DRAMATIZE THEIR OWN LABOR GRIEVANCES. UNLIKE IN RECENT PAMPLONA CASE, HOWEVER, BARCELONA CIVIL GOVERNOR ACTED PROMPTLY AND DECISIVELY, AND WHEN WORKERS ON FOLLOWING

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MADRID 00664 301723Z

DAY REFUSED TO ABANDON MINE SIT-IN HE SENT POLICE TO BOTTOM OF MINE TO BRING UP AND EVICT STRIKERS FROM MINE.

4. BILBAO AREA IS PERHAPS WHERE MOST STRIKE ACTIVITY NOW STILL IN PROGRESS, WITH SOME 9,000 WORKERS IN A DOZEN FIRMS REPORTEDLY ON STRIKE, MANY BECAUSE OF CONTRACT-RELATED ISSUES. MOST RECENT COMPANY IN BILBAO AREA TO BE HIT BY STRIKE WAS FIRESTONE TIRE COMPANY, WHERE IN RECENT DAYS

2,500 WORKERS COMMENCED STRIKE RELATED TO DEMANDS RE
WORKER REPRESENTATIVITY. DEATH OF A WHITE COLLAR WORKER,
REPORTEDLY A MEMBER OF COMMUNIST PARTY, AT HANDS OF POLICE
ON JAN 20 (REFTEL) DID NOT PROVOKE THE MASSIVE SOLIDARITY
STRIKES IN THAT ZONE THAT PERHAPS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.
HOWEVER, IT DID PROVOKE SIGNIFICANT STREET CLASHES WITH
POLICE, PARTICULARLY ON JAN 21 WHEN A REPORTED 4,000
PERSONS WHO ATTENDED THE DEAD WORKER'S FUNERAL MASS IN
BILBAO SUBURB CLASHED WITH POLICE AFTER LEAVING CHURCH IN
SERIOUS INCIDENT IN WHICH AT LEAST 15 PERSONS WERE
ARRESTED.

5. ON GOVT LABOR SIDE, CABINET ON JAN 24 APPROVED A NEW
DRAFT "LAW ON LABOR RELATIONS", WHICH IT ANNOUNCED IT WILL
SEND TO CORTES FOR DEBATE. GOVT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THIS WAS,
IN FACT, LONG-PROMISED "BASIC LABOR LAW", ALTHOUGH ITS
NAME HAD BEEN CHANGED. NEW DRAFT LAW IS SUPPOSED TO
CONSTITUTE A MAJOR RECODIFICATION OF SPANISH LABOR
LEGISLATION. IT INCLUDES SUCH IMPROVEMENTS AS:
(A) AN INCREASE IN LEGAL MINIMUM WORKING AGE FROM 14 TO 16
YEARS; (B) ESTABLISHMENT OF LEGAL LABOR EQUALITY FOR
WOMEN; (C) A REDUCTION IN MAXIMUM LEGAL WORK WEEK FROM
48 TO 44 HOURS; (D) ADDITIONAL PROTECTION FOR WORKERS WITH
RESPECT TO FIRINGS; (E) EXTENSION OF LEGAL MINIMUM ANNUAL
PAID VACATIONS TO THREE WEEKS, (F) ESTABLISHMENT OF
RESTRICTIONS ON COMPULSORY OVERTIME; AND (G) PROVISION FOR
A NEW MECHANISM FOR PERIODICALLY ADJUSTING THE NATIONAL
MINIMUM WAGE.

6. PROPOSED NEW LABOR RELATIONS LAW, HOWEVER, IS
CONSPICUOUS FOR ABSENCE CERTAIN KEY ISSUES. DESPITE
PREVIOUS INDICATIONS IT MIGHT TACKLE PROBLEM, NEW LAW
CONTAINS NO REFERENCE TO POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING RIGHT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MADRID 00664 301723Z

TO STRIKE, AND CABINET HAS REPORTEDLY DECIDED TO DEAL WITH
THAT BURNING ISSUE SEPARATELY IN THE FORM OF A DECREE IN
RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, AMID INDICATIONS SUCH A DECREE MIGHT
EVEN PERMIT, FOR FIRST TIME IN FRANCO SPAIN, MODIFIED LEGAL
RIGHT TO STRIKE. LAW ALSO DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY PROVISION
FOR "REFORM OF THE ENTERPRISE", A CONCEPT UNDER WHICH
CODETERMINATION OF SOME FORM OF WORKER PARTICIPATION IN
MANAGEMENT WOULD BE PERMITTED. THAT ISSUE WILL ALSO
APPARENTLY BE DEALT WITH SEPARATELY, REPORTEDLY IN A
SUBSEQUENT FUTURE LAW. ADDITIONALLY, NEW DRAFT LAW
CONTAINS NO REFERENCES TO POSSIBILITY OF MODIFYING PRESENT
STRUCTURE OF GOVT-CONTROLLED SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION
(SSO), REPORTEDLY BECAUSE THAT SUBJECT WAS NOT WITHIN
ITS PURVIEW AND BECAUSE SSO STRUCTURE WAS ALREADY MODIFIED
BY 1971 SYNDICAL LAW. THUS LAW AVOIDS DEALING WITH THREE

PRINCIPAL CURRENT LABOR AND SYNDICAL RELATIONS ISSUES FOR WHICH THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL PRESSURES FOR REFORM AND WHICH WERE ALSO IMPORTANT FACTORS IN RECENT STRIKE WAVE.

7. COMMENT: CURRENT DIMUNITION IN STRIKE ACTIVITY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE, ALTHOUGH NEW STRIKES COULD CROP UP AT ANY TIME. GOVT APPEARS TO BE NOW PURSUING "CARROT AND STICK" POLICY RE STRIKES AND LABOR DISPUTES. ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO IT APPEARED TO SHIFT TO A MUCH TOUGHER "LAW AND ORDER" STANCE RE LABOR AGITATION, WHICH STANCE APPEARS TO HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT IN INHIBITING STRIKE ACTIVITY. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, GOVT ALSO APPEARS BE INCREASINGLY ANXIOUS TO RESOLVE ALL PENDING LABOR-RELATED PROBLEMS, AND HAS BEEN GRANTING SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF COMPULSORY ARBITRATION DECISIONS MORE OR LESS FAVORABLE TO WORKER DEMANDS, IN ORDER TO END MOST LABOR DISPUTES WHICH REVOLVE AROUND CONTRACT ISSUES. ADDITIONALLY, GOVT'S ANNOUNCEMENT NEW LABOR RELATIONS LAW IS ALSO DESIGNED SHOW WORKERS THAT GOVT IS CONCERNED FOR THEIR WELFARE AND IS TAKING STEPS TO INCREASE THEIR LEGAL PROTECTION.

EATON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR LAW, LABOR STRIKES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MADRID00664
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750035-0439
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975017/aaaaaftn.tel
Line Count: 191
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MADRID 429
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <17 SEP 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH LABOR SCENE
TAGS: ELAB, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006